

camped for the night. On the morning of the 6th, General Averell threw out a strong skirmish line that cleared his front to the foot of the Mountain. About 9 A. M. the 10th W. Va. Inft., 28th Ohio Inft. and one company of the 14th Pa. Cav. and two pieces of Ewing's Battery were sent around on a back road 6½ miles where they formed, and struck the enemy in force. Here is where the principal and hardest part of the battle was fought, and in passing over one small plot of cleared land, not comprising more than one acre, thirteen were killed and forty-seven were wounded. Some of those wounded died later, so if in this battlefield covering nearly two thousand acres of land and fought on by seven thousand determined soldiers, what would the casualty list have been if the land had been cleared. According to numbers, it might have been a second Lookout Mountain, a Fredericksburg, or a battle of great slaughter. Providence was kind, whilst the Mountain State was baptized in blood. Averell then formed the 2nd, 3rd and 8th W. Va. Mounted Infantry, with a portion of the 14th Pa. Cavalry in line of battle, who succeeded in driving the Confederate forces, composed of the 22nd Va. Inft. and 19th Va. Cav. and other units up the mountain, near the summit. While further on the left of the Confederate line we find a portion of Colonel Averell's regiment, 20th Va., Colonel.....commanding, Kesler's Battalion, 23rd Va., Major Blessing; four companies Derrick's battalion, a portion of the 22nd Va. Inft. Some of these units have been twice named because, as the fighting became more severe on the Confederate left, they weakened their right by sending reinforcements to strengthen their left. I give it as my opinion, knowing the spirit of the men who fought that battle, that if the army had not been protected by a dense forest that fifty per cent of the men engaged would have been slaughtered.

The forces engaged in the Battle were composed of twelve Confederate units, regiments, battalions and independent companies.

While the Union forces were composed of nine units, regiments and battalions, there was but a slight difference in the numbers composing the two armies, the 10th West Virginia infantry and the 23rd Ohio that comprised the flanking party and did the principle fighting was officially reported as 1175 soldiers while the 22nd Virginia Infantry, Confederate, was reported officially at 550 soldiers strong and the 23rd Virginia Battalion 350 strong. Captain Marshall with 125 dismounted cavalry, Captain Derring's battalion 300, and Major Kesler's battalion and other units composed a very

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The "fourth separate brigade" was created March 28, 1863 and the command was given over to Gen. Roberts who had his headquarters at Weston. It included all the eastern section of West Virginia in which section were numerous Confederate sympathizers. There being probably more Confederate than Union people. This was true of Pocahontas Co. and Pocahontas was in the very heart of the bush-whacking section. There were so many deadly rifle shots, and both sides engaged in this unlawful warfare. Regular soldiers sometimes practiced it. In fact the State Guards or Scouts practiced this type of warfare almost altogether. This state of things Roberts intended to put down by driving the Confederates out. His policy was to make every sympathizer with the Confederates leave home. In this he had trouble. It was about this time that our families took to refugeeing. Here is an example of his mistaken policy. He might harry the old folks out of their homes because they had a son in the Confederate army, to find out later that these same parents had four other sons in the Union army. He was soon in disgrace at Washington and was referred to as the general who made "war on women and children."

On May 18, 1863 General William Woods Averill was ordered to find Roberts and to take over his command. Averill instead of proceeding against Staunton, as expected, came to Huntersville in Pocahontas Co. where he dispersed small detachments of Confederates, capturing some arms and stores.

He then marched into Greenbrier County and the battle of Rocky Gap was fought. On Averill's next appearance in Pocahontas County the battle of Droop Mountain was fought. After this battle Averill went as far south as Lewisburg then into Hampshire County. There he was notified he must make a raid on Salem

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CIVIL WAR

Virginia and destroy the railroad at this place. This was sending him with a small force (about 2,500 men) into Confederate territory held with undisputed possession.

He left Hampshire county on December 8, 1863. The first two days were spent in reaching Petersburg during which time the shoeing of horses went on as there had not been time to get the army ready for the march. The plan that was so quickly made sent Col. Moore with considerable force down through Pocahontas and on towards Kanawha to make a demonstration, and another force was sent into the valley towards Staunton. These detachments succeeded in diverting the Confederate forces from the main object of the campaign, which was the raid on the military depot and railroad at Salem.

Mr. Price goes into detail about where Averill was each day, but at any rate he marched by way of Petersburg, Franklin, Monteray, Mt. Grove, Sweet Sulphur Springs to Salem. He reached Salem on the morning of Dec. 16, 1863. They had completed their work by four o'clock in the afternoon.

He was hemmed in by forces under Fitzhugh, Lee, Jackson, Early and Echols and a terrible rain was flooding every stream. His next move was to get out of this death trap. Thus he began his famous retreat. He marched seven miles before dark and made camp. On the 17th it rained all day and all night, then turned cold. For the next four days he marched out of Virginia with the Confederates close on his heels. He had a few engagements with them. The country in Monroe and Greenbrier Counties was strongly held against him. He knew of an army at Mountain Grove. The road up Anthony's Creek to Huntersville was not open. Then it was that Averill made the most famous detour that was ever heard of. In his official report, all he said about it was that he "reached Hillsboro in Pocahontas by an "obscure road" by the evening of December 21, 1863." It had turned cold, and the streams were still high. He must have followed a

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trail of some sort for he brought his artillery through. This country between Callahans and the mouth of Spice Run is still in a state of wilderness and it would be interesting to know just how he got through with 2,500 men. It can be accounted for only on the theory that these soldiers were in the best condition physically and that they had the fierce determination to win through. The chances of a single man living to swim the Greenbrier at such a stage on such a day are rather slim, but maybe a whole army plunging into it together could overcome the rush of the icy current and bring them out on the other side. It would have been all but impossible for any other than toughened American soldiers. They say that when the army appeared in the Little Levels that they did not come by any road particularly, but swarmed up the side of the river ridge and broke over into the cleared level fields with a front several miles wide. The soldiers were all but starving. They had been marching through Confederate territory and after leaving Covington they had come through the wilderness. The Levels was the first country they had seen for days that afforded food and shelter.

It was the one raid into the Levels that took the citizens wholly by surprise. No well regulated army was supposed to be traveling through these mountains. But there was not much to eat there, for 1863 was the year when the county had been full of marching soldiers on both sides, culminating in the battle of Droop Mountain in November. So most of the winter provisions were well hid out. But what was found was eaten, though there seems to have been wonderful discipline in regard to taking food by force, as there was one case of an officer shooting a private who would not leave some bacon alone that a housewife insisted on keeping. At one house they ate all they could find, then ate the contents of a swill barrel that was getting ripe for swine.